

# A Policy Agenda for



## THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

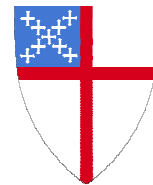
From Communities of Faith



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**



**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA



**Episcopal Church**



**Church of the Brethren Witness/**  
*Washington Office*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



**Presbyterian Church (USA)**  
*Washington Office*



**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



# **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITIES OF FAITH**

*This document, jointly crafted by the Washington offices of 11 national faith communities and ecumenical institutions, offers in some detail a policy agenda for the new President on a U.S. response to global poverty and violent conflict in the world. Our communities advocate together for many, though not all, of the policy positions expressed here. Some of us do not have positions on all the issues covered. For this reason, this document does not carry endorsements, as does our accompanying consensus statement **A Policy Agenda for the New Administration from Communities of Faith**. We provide this more detailed document as a fuller picture of the issues that many of our offices address and of the policies we expect to advocate for with the new Administration and Congress.*

## **Winning the Struggle against Global Poverty: Creating Economic Opportunity through Foreign Assistance, Debt Cancellation, and Trade Justice**

In offering this policy agenda, we do so inspired by a theological tradition that places concern for the poor squarely at the moral center of a just people's identity. The prophet Jeremiah, in summing the identity of a wise king, tells us that "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well." Responding to poverty and human suffering is inscribed deeply in the humanitarian values of our faith tradition, and accordingly, is inscribed deeply in the shared values and traditions of the American people.

Many Americans, thus, are surprised to learn that the United States spends just a fraction of one percent of its federal budget in response to poverty and suffering around the world. Americans tell pollsters that they assume the number to be closer to 15 percent, indicating that there is a broad base of support – from Americans in all walks of life – for increases in what our nation presently spends. The current U.S. Administration and Congress have accomplished important increases to our nation's poverty-and-disease focused foreign assistance, but our nation still spends less on such foreign assistance as a percentage of GDP than any other industrialized nation save for one. (This is a sharp contrast to American corporate, religious, and private giving to address world poverty, which studies have shown repeatedly to be the most generous in the world. But this giving does not substantially increase the over-all percentage of U.S. global anti-poverty funding).

Beyond the humanitarian virtue of fighting global poverty, such efforts also play a crucial role in building a more stable, secure, and peaceful world. Poverty and suffering do not directly breed violence, but they do breed desperation which, in turn fuels the rifts in the human community that allow terrorism, war, and conflict to flourish. Once again, our faith tradition points to generosity in response to human suffering. "If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted," the prophet Isaiah tells us, "your light will rise in the darkness and your gloom will be like the noonday. You shall be called the repairer of the breach and the restorer of streets to live in." Now, more than at any time since the end of the Second

World War, the world is threatened by fundamental breaches and rifts with the potential to deeply undermine the shared future of all human beings. A monumental new effort to address human poverty and suffering would yield dividends in the U.S.'s relationship with other countries – both friend and foe – and would offer a bold demonstration that a wise response to instability is healing, not further division. “When the ways of people please the Lord,” the writer of Proverbs tells us, “he causes even their enemies to be at peace with them.”

For this reason, our church institutions join the growing call for rationalizing and elevating the importance of U.S. commitment to global development assistance.

What we offer in the pages that follow is an issue-by-issue recommendation to the next U.S. President for a bold new initiative to fight poverty and disease, and promote economic opportunity, around the world. We view such a comprehensive commitment as a present-day equivalent of the Marshall Plan. The recommendations draw their inspiration from the Millennium Development Goals, the international commitments to poverty-and-disease eradication made by all UN member states, including the United States, in this decade. The recommendations also stem, however, from our own faith communities work in responding to human suffering around the world and our many moments of witness to the power of human compassion to transform lives.

In short, we believe that a new and bold initiative to fight poverty and disease abroad is the American thing to do. President Kennedy famously said that “here on earth, the Lord’s work must truly be our own.” We agree, and join the apostle Paul’s song of praise: “Glory to God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.”

## **PART ONE: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

### **Introduction: Better, More Effective Aid**

In order to win the war against poverty around the world, our nation must not only increase and expand development assistance, but must take new steps to ensure that the money is used in effective, transparent, and measurable ways aimed at producing results in the alleviation of poverty. Such efforts serve not just the humanitarian objectives of our nation, but also offer immeasurable contributions to the creation of stable, secure communities around the world where opportunity trumps desperation.

Aid volume must increase at a higher rate than it has over the past decade. Polls show most Americans strongly supportive of such efforts, believing that the nation already spends at least 15 percent of its annual budget fighting global poverty, when in truth actual expenditures total just a fraction of one percent. **An investment of additional one percent of our nation’s budget on poverty focused foreign assistance, through the specific strategies detailed in this sections 1-5 of this paper, below, would represent a fair-share U.S. contribution to the total costs needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015).**

Equally importantly, however, the next President should take bold and creative steps to guarantee the effectiveness of U.S. foreign aid in fighting poverty. Genuine economic development to overcome poverty enables people to meet their essential needs. It increases their ability to obtain food, safe water, shelter, clothing, health care, and education, and allows them greater control over their own resources and fruits of their labor. The aim of U.S. foreign aid is to empower governments and citizens to manage their own way forward from poverty and injustice. Low-income countries must have enough space to craft their own economic policy and adequate room for policy, autonomy and experimentation to develop and diversify their

economies. U.S. foreign aid must not be denied to countries because of their choice of economic policies. Countries receiving aid should be given latitude to choose companies, contractors and consultants.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Initiate a comprehensive review of foreign-assistance efforts, conducted in cooperation with program implementers and other experts, to identify areas where our nation's development bureaucracy must be improved in order to best meet our nation's development goals.
- Strongly consider the appointment of a cabinet-level secretary with responsibility for consolidating program authority for U.S. global development efforts and improving efficacy.
- Improve coordination with other donor governments, so as to minimize the administrative burdens on recipient countries.
- Undertake an analysis of how to best monitor and track the use of, and effectiveness of, all current U.S. foreign-assistance programs.

## 1. HIV/AIDS

The fight against HIV/AIDS around the world is at a crossroads. Medical advances in drugs and other methods of treatment have created an opportunity for people living with HIV to live longer, healthier lives. At the same time, proven prevention strategies offer the opportunity to create communities free of HIV/AIDS around the world. Unfortunately, infection rates remain on the rise in many parts of the world, and many communities lack access to treatment. New infections number approximately 7,000 each day, while AIDS-related deaths total at least 5,700 each day. Turning the tide against HIV/AIDS requires an unprecedented mobilization of the world's resources so that proven, successful strategies for prevention, treatment, and care can be brought to all at-risk communities.

Over the past five years, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) – along with the bilateral efforts of other donor countries and the multilateral Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria – have begun to gain traction in fighting the pandemic. **Assuring the long-term success of these efforts will require the next President of the United States to support unprecedented increases in funding for the fight against AIDS and new, creative programmatic use of those funds in ways that best meet the needs of suffering and at-risk communities in poor countries.**

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Increase funding for the fight against HIV/AIDS (along with the associated malaria and TB pandemics) to at least the Congressional authorized level of \$48 billion over the next five years.
- Lead the world in achieving universal access to prevention, treatment and care by committing to achieve over the next five years – with U.S. funds – treatment services for three million people, prevention services for 12 million, and care for 12 million;
- Intensify support for the work of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria through a commitment to provide at least 1/3 of the Global Fund's operational budget with U.S. resources (a figure commensurate with the U.S. share of the global economy).
- Strengthen and expand the focus on HIV-prevention in U.S. programs through knowledge- and evidence-based approaches that are tailored individually to meet the needs of local communities.

- Strengthen health systems and the health-care work force in poor countries, including the training and deployment of an adequate number of new health-care workers in poor countries over the next decade.
- Work for universal access to Basic Education as a “social vaccine” to combat HIV/AIDS.

## **2. MALARIA**

Along with HIV/AIDS, malaria is responsible for most poverty-related death around the world each day. Despite this, it is an highly preventable, and highly treatable disease that does not require a high-cost commitment of resources from donor governments. Nevertheless, responding to malaria consumes nearly 40% of health-care expenditures in Africa. Successfully combating the disease will not only eliminate one of the world’s most potent killers, but will free resources for other vital public-health related expenditures in developing countries.

The U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) has been an important start in combating malaria around the world. **The next President should commit to expand and intensify the U.S. government’s response to prevention and treatment of the pandemic, with the goal of eliminating malaria-related deaths in Africa within a decade.**

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Establish targets for the prevention and treatment of the disease with the goal of eliminating all malaria deaths in Africa within the decade. Appropriating the authorized funds of \$1 billion per year, along with vital investments in the work of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB, and malaria, will help spur needed action from partner governments and private donors.
- Expand and intensify ongoing U.S. government investment in the efforts of local communities – especially churches and faith-based institutions – which possess the infrastructural capacity to quickly mobilize low-cost interventions against the disease like insecticide-treated bed-nets, effective medicinal treatment for the disease, and vital skills training for at-risk families;
- Continue working to spur the donations of U.S. corporations, foundations, and other private donors currently working to bring prevention and treatment to the needy communities.

## **3. EXPANDING THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN**

Global poverty has a unique impact on women around the world, and women hold several important keys toward its complete eradication. Seventy percent of those living in poverty are women. Women perform about 66 percent of the world’s work, while receiving less than five percent of the world’s income. Similarly, women produce well over half the world’s food supply, yet own just one percent of the world’s farmland. Expanded access to economic opportunity for women is a vital component of the world’s efforts to eradicate poverty, and as shown by the success of both private and public micro-finance programs over the last decade, when investments in women are made, their families and communities benefit.

**The next President should commit to making the economic empowerment of women in the developing world – through expanded access to business capital and land and property rights – a centerpiece of his or her foreign-aid policy.**

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Work with Congress to pass the bipartisan Global Opportunities and Resources for Women to Thrive (GROWTH) Act, a bill that commits U.S. funds to expanded microcredit, property rights, and other economic-empowerment initiatives for women in the developing world.
- Ensure that U.S. development agencies and trade representatives work with local institutions in low-income countries that are working to provide women with training for business and economic development as well as strengthening of property rights.
- Strengthen and expand enforcement of anti-trafficking and anti-violence programs for women around the world, and work with Congress to pass the new, bipartisan International Violence Against Women (I-VAWA) Act.

#### **4. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD**

Nearly 11 million children around the world, under the age of five, die each year as a result of easily-preventable or treatable causes, and at least 200 million have been orphaned as a result of AIDS or poverty. Along with desperately needed investments in achieving universal access to childhood education (see below), efforts to address the health and well-being of children in low-income countries are a vital part of a successful strategy to reduce global poverty around the world. Simple, low-cost investments in public health, nutrition, and vaccination can save the lives of at least half a million children around the world. For example, as little as \$50,000 invested annually in vitamin supplements can save the lives of half a million children. So could investment of as little as \$500,000 annually in measles vaccinations. Other relatively modest investments are needed to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children and protect children from human trafficking. **The next President should commit to key investments of both resources and diplomatic capital to address the needs of at risk-children around the world, with the goal of leading the effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of reducing under-five deaths by 2/3 by the year 2015.**

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Invest at least \$1.6 billion annually in cost-effective, high-impact interventions such as capsules of Vitamin A, measles vaccinations, and oral-rehydration treatments for diarrhea and severe dehydration;
- Invest at least \$2 billion by 2010 in effective, community-based interventions to address challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable children;
- Create and fund a high-level U.S. government office dedicated to effective administration, monitoring, and evaluation of our nation's response to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children.
- Strengthen the enforcement of anti-trafficking and anti-violence efforts focused on children around the world.

#### **5. EDUCATION FOR ALL**

The lack of access to basic education is among the most significant contributors to endemic poverty around the world. One in four adults in developing countries cannot read or write, and more than 100 million children – 57% of whom are girls – lack access to primary education. Universal primary education would cost just less than \$10 billion per year for the developing world (half of what Americans spend annually on ice cream) and offers the potential to increase the income of poor families, strengthen communities, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, and empower women and girls. **The next President should commit to providing the full U.S. share (approximately 1/3) of the resources needed to achieve universal primary**

## **education in the developing world by the year 2015.**

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Work with Congress to make passage of the Education for All Act a priority in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. The legislation calls for the U.S. to take a leadership role in helping all children complete a free, quality basic education, and authorizes the U.S. to spend up to \$3 billion per year (a fair U.S. share of the global need) to do so.
- Work with both donor and recipient governments for the complete elimination of all school fees, both formal and informal.
- Invest in specific educational strategies for orphans and vulnerable children, including efforts to save children from child labor, human trafficking, conflict-based or other displacement, or abuse based on disability or other factors.

## **6. CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**

Safe water and adequate sanitation are fundamental components of a strategy to improve health, education, and economic well-being in the developing world. More than one billion people around the world lack access to clean water sources and 2.6 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation. As a result, nearly 2 million children die each year from water and sanitation-related diarrheal disease. A study by the World Health Organization estimates that every \$1 invested in clean water results in a return of \$8 in saved time, increased productivity, and reduced costs for health care. **The next President should commit the resources necessary to meet the clean water and sanitation targets in the Millennium Development Goals.**

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Create a stronger foreign-policy emphasis on water and sanitation by leveraging existing interventions and integrating low-cost water and sanitation improvements into existing health and education programs, and by fully implementing the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act.
- Invest in essential infrastructure for nationwide water and sanitation systems in developing countries, especially in rural areas, and technical assistance for strengthening government capacities and policies to improve sanitation and safe water supplies.
- Increase dramatically spending on water and sanitation in developing countries, providing a proportionate share – \$1.3 billion per year-- of the \$4 billion annually needed from donors to meet the MDG water targets by 2015.

## **7. CLIMATE CHANGE:**

It is vital that the U.S. joins the rest of the global family and take effective, cooperative, and just action on climate change, making the critical linkages with global poverty. To this end, U.S. policy must recognize our responsibility for creating a disproportionate share of greenhouse gas emissions and the fact that those who are bearing a disproportionate share of the consequences are impoverished, marginalized communities in low-income nations.

The gravity of climate change, the nature of its ramifications, and the scope of strategies required to effectively address it require a re-examination of all aspects of U.S. foreign policy. Climate change will not only exacerbate demands on existing programs such as emergency/disaster relief, immigration, hunger and

food aid, global health, and women's and girls' empowerment, but also require fresh strategies to address economic development, trade, debt relief, and global security.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Provide a U.S. fair share of adaptation funding, directing it to the countries which are most vulnerable to climate change. This funding should be above and beyond current foreign assistance levels and be seen as compensation for harm done, not as an optional act of goodwill.
  - The primary focus of adaptation funding must be to: build resilience and adaptive capacity in vulnerable, local communities; address magnified disaster assistance and relief needs; and to include climate change in development planning.
  - Adaptation funding should be provided through channels that are transparent, accountable, and fully responsive to the needs of affected communities in developing countries, ensuring that the interests and needs of women and girls are included.
- Couple U.S. adaptation funding with a thorough reassessment of the economic and military premises which serve as the foundations of our foreign policy.

## **8. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES**

Within the broad scope of devastation due to armed conflict and other catastrophes, millions of men, women, and children are displaced each year, becoming refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Persecuted for their religion, ethnicity, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, refugees are forced to flee their home countries in search of a safe, protected space. Unfortunately, the lack of international humanitarian assistance has resulted in declining options for these desperate refugees and IDPs. Because of its resources and role in the world, the United States has a responsibility to preserve and expand protection, durable solutions, and resettlement options to ensure safety and shelter for these vulnerable, persecuted people. Robust funding for programs assisting refugees and displaced persons will increase the capacity of social service networks in refugee-hosting countries to meet the needs of refugees and prevent instability in those regions. U.S. leadership will also prompt the international community to assist displaced populations and further fund United Nations High Commission for Refugees' (UNHCR) global initiatives.

A strong U.S. commitment to the challenges facing displaced person and refugees fosters international goodwill, promotes regional security, and continues the long-standing humanitarian traditions of the United States.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Work with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to increase the number of refugees resettled in the United States and take leadership in consistently funding a large portion of UN appeals.
- Work with Congress to increase funding for the Office of Refugee Resettlement (HHS/ORR), as well as the State Department's Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) and Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) accounts.

## **PART TWO: DEBT CANCELLATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As important as development assistance is to fighting poverty in the world, its effectiveness is hampered by the phenomenon of poor countries' debt repayments to rich countries and international-lending institutions. Many Americans are shocked to learn that despite all of the monumental increases in poverty-and disease-focused foreign assistance by the U.S. and other industrialized countries over the past decade, recipient governments bleed out more money in debt repayments every year than they receive in foreign assistance, critically hampering their ability to address the health and wellbeing of their people. Over the past decade, limited debt-cancellation programs by industrialized nations and multilateral lending institutions have begun to turn the tide in a few dozen poor countries. Significantly expanded action is needed, however, and must be a priority in the next American president's strategy to fight poverty and disease abroad.

### **BACKGROUND**

For decades, many impoverished countries have been spending billions of dollars each year repaying debts to donor countries and international financial institutions. Many of these loans were given for political reasons during the Cold War to prop up particular governments and, in many cases, were wasted by corrupt and unaccountable regimes. These large debts became a serious impediment to poverty reduction and economic development. Countries began taking on new loans to repay old ones.

In the late 1990s, industrialized countries began taking action to address the debt crisis in the world. As a result of the global Jubilee 2000 campaign and subsequent activism around the world, rich nations and international-lending institutions have created two debt-cancellation programs in the past decade: the expanded Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Both initiatives target 40 of the most impoverished countries in the world, and have brought limited – but extraordinarily successful – debt cancellation to these countries. The processes used to grant debt cancellation are designed to ensure that savings from cancellation are directed toward country-owned poverty-alleviation priorities.

The success of these initiatives is clear: the 22 countries have completed the debt cancellation process are receiving approximately \$81 billion in relief. If all 40 potentially eligible countries complete the process, the savings will total \$147 billion. These savings have brought demonstrable gains:

- Tanzania has used its savings from debt relief to increase education spending and eliminate school fees. Almost overnight, an estimated 1.6 million children enrolled in school. By 2003, 3.1 million additional children were attending school.
- Mozambique used its debt service savings to vaccinate children against tetanus, whooping cough and diphtheria, as well as to install electricity in schools and to build new ones.
- Nigeria is using \$750 million in debt service savings from 2006 to train and recruit new teachers.
- Cameroon used its debt savings to launch a national HIV/AIDS plan for education, testing and prevention, including of mother-to-child transmission.

### **CURRENT SITUATION AND A WAY FORWARD**

In spite of these successes, experts estimate that at least 65 additional countries will need complete cancellation of their existing debts in order to meet the poverty-reduction targets of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. For various reasons related to good governance and fiscal transparency, not all of these countries should qualify for debt cancellation now. But industrialized countries should create a process to allow these countries to begin qualifying when they demonstrate good governance, fiscal transparency, and willingness to

invest savings in the health and wellbeing of their people. A bill currently pending in the U.S. Congress, the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Debt Cancellation, would direct the Administration to begin such a process in negotiation with other members of the Group-of-Eight (G8) nations.

**The next President of the United States should make a strategy for expanded debt cancellation a centerpiece of a foreign-policy initiative designed to fight poverty and disease in the world. The United States should cancel its own bilateral debt – and working with partners to cancel the multilateral debt – from poor and middle-income countries that demonstrate good governance, fiscal transparency, and a commitment to investing the health and wellbeing of their populaces.**

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Fully finance, by pressing for Congressional appropriations, the world's existing debt cancellation mechanisms. This will allow countries currently in the cancellation process to move through it without delay;
- Lead G8 donors in an expanded debt cancellation initiative for all remaining countries that require debt cancellation in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The initiative should include strong qualification criteria that ensure that savings go to countries that will use it transparently to invest in the human needs of its people;
- Cancel the bilateral debts owed to the U.S. by all countries that qualify for multilateral cancellation under a new debt-relief initiative (a step the U.S. has taken toward countries that have already qualified under existing mechanisms); and
- Ensure that the gains from debt cancellation are not lost by making future development-money flows available in the form of grants — not new loans — and without imposing harmful economic conditions.

### **PART THREE: PROMOTING FAIR TRADE**

International trade can be one important engine of economic progress for developing countries. The United States and developing countries alike need *fair and just trade* agreements that are shaped to meet the goals of sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

International trade policies and practices present a moral challenge because of their profound effect on the lives of people around the world and on creation. Today there is a wide-spread conviction that our framework for trade policy must be reviewed and revised to better meet the needs of people facing the challenges of the new global economic environment.

Crafting trade policies that will foster the wellbeing of our global neighbors and the natural environment will also improve America's well-being. U.S. trade policies must not be based primarily on narrow commercial interests, but must take into account long-term U.S. interests in a more secure, stable and just world. Global stability and real human security can be best achieved in a world in which poverty and inequality are declining and all people have the resources needed for lives of dignity, sufficiency and community participation.

As religious institutions, our message is that trade policies and agreements must put people first. They should further sustainable, people-centered social and economic development for our neighbors around the world while preserving and creating good jobs here at home. They must support governments in adopting policies to protect public health and the natural environment. Trade policies must strike a balance between creating a

predictable structure for international trade and preserving the policy space necessary for governments to foster and secure economic, social and human development for all their citizens.

The next President should take the lead in forging a new more just framework for U.S. trade policy and international trade agreements.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- Ensure that trade agreements are formulated with full democratic accountability and citizen participation both in the United States and U.S. trading partners.
- Adopt trade policies that have a demonstrable pro-development impact on developing countries, strengthening their domestic markets, expanding livelihoods, bolstering small-holder farmers, promoting local agriculture and alleviating poverty.
- Formulate trade policies and agreements that prioritize long-term ecological sustainability and the stability of the climate, and protect and conserve the richness and diversity of the natural world.
- Require (pre and post) country impact evaluations to assess the effects of provisions in trade agreements on eco-systems, poverty eradication, job growth, food security and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Ensure that trade agreements preserve the right of developing countries to direct trade and development strategies, such that they retain control over their own development policies and are not forced to make trade concessions that negatively impact poverty alleviation strategies.
- Reform trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, so that US commodity crops do not unfairly undermine local production in developing countries, threaten the livelihood of millions of farmers, and deprive developing countries of earnings and market share.
- Ensure that trade agreements preserve the right and capacity of developing countries to provide affordable access to essential medicines and essential public services, such as water, health care and education, to their people.

## **Promoting Peace with Justice:**

### **U.S. Role in 11 Critical Conflict, Post-Conflict and Fragile States**

Our faith communities offer this proposed policy agenda for the next American President on 11 of the world's most severe conflict, post-conflict and fragile states. We do so from a shared theological tradition that both proclaims the promise of God's eternal peace and inspires our work toward earthly peace through just and harmonious relations between people of all nations. As the prophet Isaiah proclaims "Give God no rest" until that day when the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." We believe that the policies of the U.S. Government are critical to advancing Isaiah's vision of a world where peace between nations is fulfilled.

Peace in the biblical sense embraces a wide vision: total well-being, true security, wholeness, abundant life, health, and joyous harmony with God, other people and creation. We believe that peace in this full sense is the intended order for human society. True peacemaking involves not only ending violent conflicts, but also restoring societal wholeness, respecting human dignity and empowering the impoverished and disenfranchised.

We strive for this holistic vision of peace in our increasingly interconnected world which presents both great opportunities and significant challenges for peace. Technologies like the internet provide for the exchange of ideas between diverse peoples from opposite sides of the earth and the global economy results in an interlocking web of financial connectivity that unites diverse people in a common destiny. At the same time, globalization presents new and dangerous threats to our brothers and sisters in other countries and to the United States as well, as the tragic events of September 11, 2001 reveal.

These opportunities and challenges demand wise and responsible leadership from the U.S. Government in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that seeks to help build a better and safer world in new and creative ways. Despite impressive human advances in technology, science and economic development, more than 200 million lives were claimed by conflict in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – more than any other century before. Eight years into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is no indication that conflict will claim any fewer lives over the next 100 years. And, in spite of significant advances in military technology, innocent civilians – especially women and children – continue to bear the brunt of casualties and hardship from violent conflict.

We are called to speak out against such harsh consequences of violent conflict and urge all nations to pursue alternatives to war. Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially the struggle against global terrorism, will not be won by military might, but rather through the victory of ideas and ensuring the opportunity for freedom and justice for all. We believe that national security can only be achieved when human and environmental security is realized. The U.S. Government has a critical role to play in the international community to help ensure that the inequities which so often lead to conflict are eliminated.

We believe that peace is God's will, and the Church is called to be peacemakers and advocates for peace. What we offer in the pages that follow are brief, top-line policy priorities we view as critical for achieving peace with justice in some of the world's most significant and tragic conflict and fragile states. "Blessed are the peacemakers," says Jesus, "for they shall be called the children of God."

## **PART I: THE MIDDLE EAST REGION**

### **1. Iraq: Promote Stability and Iraqi Sovereignty; Embrace Regional Diplomacy**

Despite varied opinion about the controversial invasion of Iraq in 2003, it is clear that the stability of the Middle East region depends, in large part, on the ability of the current Iraqi Government to successfully facilitate internal stability through legitimate representative governance structures that are inclusive of Iraqi sectarian and ethnic diversity and that establish the rule of law and promote human rights.

The next President should seek to unite the American people behind a vision of U.S. engagement in Iraq that responsibly ends U.S. military operations and encourages long-term stability in the region and sovereignty in Iraq.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **Increase U.S. diplomatic efforts** to urge the Iraqi Government to make the necessary political compromises and power-sharing agreements to end the ongoing ethnic and sectarian violence in Iraq. The U.S. should condition continued financial support on such progress.
- **Leverage U.S. influence with regional actors** to ensure support for an inclusive, representative Iraqi Government. The U.S. should include high-level diplomatic engagement with Iran and Syria in this effort.
- **Provide adequate humanitarian relief and development assistance.** The war in Iraq has produced more than 2.4 million refugees and more than 2 million internally displaced persons. Today, 4 million Iraqis are in need of food assistance.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. has a moral obligation to help meet the needs of those displaced and otherwise made vulnerable by the conflict.

## 2. The Holy Land: Viable Two-State Solution Within Reach

The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict not only destabilizes the Middle East and brings ongoing suffering to Israelis and Palestinians; it also threatens US national security. The realization of a viable two-state solution where Israel and Palestine live side-by-side within secure and recognized borders is critical to ending human suffering and promoting stability in the region. The U.S. Government should continue to help facilitate an environment conducive to a two-state solution that includes a shared Jerusalem as capital of the two independent states, ensuring access and full rights to the city for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **Robust diplomacy and U.S. leadership** in order to make concrete progress toward a two-state peace agreement as soon as possible. The U.S. should ensure that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority are abiding by their Road Map obligations and increase efforts to resolve the Gaza crisis. A failed peace process will strengthen extremist elements throughout the region.
- **Support peacemaking and economic development in the Palestinian territories** to ensure the success of a sustainable Palestinian state alongside Israel. This must include efforts to improve daily living conditions, bolster the Palestinian economy and increase the capacity of the Palestinian government to build effective institutions.
- **Promote Pluralism in the Holy Land** by ensuring the viability of the Palestinian Christian community. Palestinian Christians are increasingly emigrating due to the economic decline and political instability of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The health and viability of indigenous Christians is vital to the coexistence of all three faith communities in the Holy Land. Christian institutions provide a safety net for people in need through vital humanitarian programs and their presence plays an important role in maintaining pluralism and fostering open, tolerant forms of government throughout the Middle East.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Iraq Office in Amman, “Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq: Facts and Figures” (13 November, 2007), [www.uniraq.org/documents/Humanitarian%20Crisis%20in%20Iraq%20Facts%20and%20Figures%20131107.pdf](http://www.uniraq.org/documents/Humanitarian%20Crisis%20in%20Iraq%20Facts%20and%20Figures%20131107.pdf)

### 3. Afghanistan: Ensure Stability and Address Humanitarian Needs

Seven years after U.S.-led coalition forces toppled the Taliban, security and political progress in Afghanistan remain weak and extremely fragile. Conflict has spread from the south and east to the west and the central areas around Kabul. The Taliban and narcotics trade are resurgent, and the country remains among the poorest and least developed in the world. The potential consequences of a further destabilized Afghanistan include a narcotics state that is once again a haven for terrorists, widespread lawlessness, and civil war along ethnic and sectarian lines. Thus, an international commitment to a stable and peaceful Afghanistan is critical.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to demonstrate a strong commitment to the future of the people of Afghanistan and to:

- **Maintain sufficient funding to sustain progress** to ensure stability and address political economic and humanitarian challenges.
- **Increase strategic coordination of all international actors** in order to most effectively share and utilize resources.
- **Use U.S. leverage to hold Afghan government accountable** to political progress, building democratic institutions, and fighting corruption. A commitment to transparency and human rights would strengthen the Afghan government significantly.
- **Increase humanitarian aid and development assistance** to address the critical needs of the 40% of rural Afghans who are malnourished, the 70% of Afghans who live on less than \$2 a day, and the two-thirds of Afghans over the age of 15 who cannot read or write.<sup>2</sup> A national development strategy coordinated with international actors and the Afghan government must include confronting those in power who trade in narcotics and creating sustainable, alternative opportunities for those involved in narcotics.

### 4. Pakistan: Promote Stability, Address Poverty and Encourage Democracy

Pakistan is a focal point in the international struggle against religious extremism and terrorism. Members and leadership of al Qaeda and the Taliban enjoy safe haven in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the northwest borderland region, where they continue to plan and administer attacks in the region and abroad. Those operating in the FATA arguably pose the most serious threat to the United States and the international community.

While the U.S. imposed aid sanctions on Pakistan after Pervez Musharraf undemocratically secured the Presidency in a bloodless coup in 1999, more than \$10 billion in military aid has been allocated since 2002 to help destroy the terrorist threat in FATA. In May, 2008, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported the U.S. policy that has relied on the Pakistani military to combat such forces in FATA has failed and called for a comprehensive plan to be developed to compact FATA threats.

Furthermore, the resounding defeat of autocratic President Pervez Musharraf's party in the February 2008 national elections, held just two months after the murder of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, demonstrates the desire of many Pakistanis for a legitimate and transparent democracy. The next President should address the terrorist threat in Pakistan while clearly demonstrating his support of the Pakistani people as they journey toward democratic transition.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.brookings.edu/speeches/2007/1108\\_afghanistan\\_koser.aspx?rssid=internal%20displacement](http://www.brookings.edu/speeches/2007/1108_afghanistan_koser.aspx?rssid=internal%20displacement)

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **Expand U.S. aid to Pakistan to include more economic and development assistance** to help meet the needs of the more than 57 million Pakistanis living below the poverty line. Increase coordination with relevant actors in the tribal borderlands to effectively address threats and begin more holistically addressing the poverty, illiteracy and underdevelopment in the region.
- **Increase efforts to support a stable transition to full democracy.** The U.S. should prioritize development aid and continue robust diplomatic engagement to help lift Pakistanis out of poverty and help strengthen Pakistan's democratic institutions, such as independent political parties, judiciary, and media.
- **Strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation** with important actors such as Afghanistan, China, India, EU countries, Japan, and Saudi Arabia, with the goal of normalizing Pakistan's borders. Greater cooperation and trust between Afghanistan and Pakistan is critical for addressing more effectively the terrorist threat along their border, and the dispute with India over Kashmir remains a primary obstacle to improving relations between the two countries. Such cooperation is critical to ensure that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal does not fall into the hands of al-Qaeda or other violent groups.

## **5. Iran: Embrace Effective Diplomacy and Reject war**

Statements and actions by the government of Iran continue to be of serious concern. In particular, there is the question of how to address Iran's nuclear program. The United States and European countries believe that Iran intends to develop material for nuclear weapons under the guise of a civilian nuclear power program, while Iran denies that this is so. Furthermore, Iran exercises wide influence inside Iraq and continues to send weapons to armed militias, hindering peace. Within Iran itself, serious violations of human rights occur.

In responding to these concerns, the U.S. Government until recently refused face-to-face talks with Teheran and has often employed rhetoric indicative of possible military action. The United Nations has imposed three sanction measures against Iran over its nuclear enrichment program and may soon impose a fourth. The U.S. and several other countries have imposed their own financial sanctions as well. Congress is considering legislation that would encourage a U.S. partial land, air and sea blockade of Iran. Such blockades are traditionally considered acts of war. Finally, Israel continues to consider its own possible air strike against Iran's nuclear facilities.

But a military confrontation with Iran could have costly and catastrophic consequences, resulting in much loss of life and further destabilization of the Middle East.

While difficult to achieve in the current climate of mistrust and hostile rhetoric, the potential benefits to the U.S. and the world of a new, positive relationship between the U.S. and Iran are substantial. Effective diplomacy and open engagement could bring a satisfactory resolution to the issues surrounding Iran's nuclear program. Direct engagement with Iran is recommended by the Iraq Study Group and five former Secretaries of State. A significantly improved relationship between the U.S. and Iran could engage Iran's cooperation in helping stabilize Iraq and facilitating the successful withdrawal of U.S. troops. Indeed, such mutual cooperation could help advance progress in the conflicts in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Israel-Palestine.

We urge the next President to pursue a new set of policies toward Iran that seeks to stabilize the region, increase U.S. security, resolve diplomatically concerns about Iran's nuclear program, and reject military action,

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **Engage in sustained, direct, bilateral and comprehensive talks** with Iran on the issues of Iran's nuclear program, Iraq and other issues of mutual concern.
- **Reject military action** against Iran and oppose such military action by any U.S. ally.
- **Oppose any legislation calling for a U.S. blockade** of Iran.
- **Seek a mutual respect for human rights** by both the United States and Iran, committing the United States and calling on Iran to honor international human rights obligations.

## **PART II. AFRICA**

### **1. Sudan: Two Crises, One Country. Bolstered U.S. Engagement Critical**

Sudan has been plagued by internal conflict for more than fifty years. Since independence in 1956, a variety of complex factors including race, ethnicity, religion and economic disparities – exacerbated in part by the British colonial governance system – has empowered central governments in Khartoum to further marginalize the peripheries of the country politically and economically. This marginalization has resulted in two civil wars between the North and South (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) and the 2003 uprising of rebel forces and ongoing conflict in Darfur. Combined, these conflicts have claimed more than two million lives, displaced more than three million and left several million dependent on external aid for survival.

The next President should address Sudan holistically and address two distinct but related crises: the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) governing North-South relations and a sustainable political resolution of the ongoing conflict in Darfur.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **Increase U.S diplomatic efforts to secure sustainable political resolutions** that address root causes of conflict in Sudan. The full implementation of such agreements should be of highest priority for U.S. bilateral and multilateral efforts. An effective, sustainable diplomatic effort should include continued financial and political support for the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, including the deployment of two senior level deputies; one to monitor implementation of the CPA and one to focus attention on a Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).
- **Increase funding and technical assistance for peacekeeping missions**, including U.N. and African Union (AU) efforts in South Sudan and Darfur. Effective peacekeeping operations are critical to ensuring the protection of innocent civilians and stable environments for the implementation of humanitarian relief.
- **Increase funding for humanitarian and development assistance** to help meet the needs of more than three million people of Darfur who are displaced and exclusively dependent on external aid for survival as well as the needs of the more than 400,000 Southern Sudanese refugees and internally displaced persons who are being resettled. The U.S. should leverage its generosity with other multilateral donors to secure more assistance from the international community.

## 2. Uganda: Hope for Civilians in the North, LRA Plagues Region

In what is now Africa's longest running civil war, the people of northern Uganda have suffered at the hands of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) for more than twenty years. While the LRA movement emerged from the complex post-colonial power struggle in Uganda, the LRA rebels quickly evolved into a brutal group who abandoned any political and economic objectives and proceeded to inflict massive suffering on their own people while destabilizing the region. It is estimated that the LRA has abducted more than 66,000 children over the course of the war, forcing them to be child soldiers, serve as sex slaves and laborers. While some are now returning home, up to 1.8 million civilians have been displaced from their homes into large, congested internally displaced person (IDP) camps where individuals often lack access to clean water and are largely dependent on external aid for survival.

In July 2006, peace negotiations between the LRA and the Government of Uganda began in Juba, South Sudan. Shortly thereafter, a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement was brokered, largely ending violence and child abductions for the first time in years. Peace seemed to be within reach. However, efforts over the past two years to finalize a peace deal with the signature of Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA, have yet to succeed. As of June 2008, after failing to show up at several signing ceremonies, it seems Kony is withdrawing from the peace process.

Today, the remaining estimated 700 LRA rebels have established bases in the Garamaba National Park in eastern Congo and in the Central African Republic (CAR). The LRA are conducting raids of local communities and abducting innocent civilians – both children and adults -- in the Congo, CAR and South Sudan. The regional consequences of such LRA activity are grave. In the absence of sincere re-engagement of the peace process by Kony, the U.S. Government should assume a leadership role in working with regional states and the United Nations (UN) in developing a credible containment and apprehension strategy in order to capture Kony and other LRA leaders indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) while demobilizing remaining rebels and supporting the immediate resettlement and economic development of communities in northern Uganda.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **High level U.S. diplomatic engagement** to ensure that, in cooperation with the international community and the UN, LRA leadership who are indicted by the ICC are arrested and held accountable for crimes committed against humanity and the remaining LRA forces are demobilized.
- **Targeted international aid to northern Uganda** and support for Uganda's Peace, Reconstruction and Development plan to ensure those displaced are resettled to their homes of origin and sustainable reconstruction and economic development in the north is prioritized.
- **Encouraging the Ugandan Government to implement a national truth and reconciliation process** that seeks to address root causes of the conflict and crimes committed by all parties, including the Ugandan army.

## 3. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Peace Key for Regional Stability

Despite its tremendous wealth in natural resources, including cobalt, copper and diamonds, the Democratic Republic of Congo remains one of the poorest countries in Africa due to ongoing conflict and political instability.

After more than three decades of brutal oppression under the administration of King Leopold II of Belgium which is believed to have killed at least 10 million Congolese (The Congo Free State 1877-1908), the Belgium

state was pressured by the international community to assume control of the Free State. Belgium maintained control from 1908-1960 and transferred governance to Patrice Lumumba, who was elected Prime Minister through parliamentary elections. Shortly thereafter a political crisis erupted between various Congolese political parties leading to the 1965 coup lead by Joseph Mobutu.

Mobutu's outspoken stance against communism attracted support from Western nations, including the United States, during the Cold War era. While relative stability was achieved, Mubutu's reign was notorious for vast human rights violations, political repression and corruption. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union Western support for Mobutu evaporated and the influx of Rwandan Hutu authorities responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide led to a complex conflict that resulted in the overthrow of Mobutu during the first Congo War (1996-1997). The second Congo War (1998-2003), which is estimated to be the deadliest conflict since WWII, was in part a continuation and escalation of the first Congo War.

Today, conflict in DRC has many layers but a critical aspect that must be resolved relates to the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and its many related groups that continue to act as an extremely destabilizing force in eastern Congo and threaten stability throughout the Great Lakes Region. Peace and stability in DRC, and specifically a resolution to the crisis in North Kivu, must be made a priority of U.S. Government policy.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **Increase diplomatic engagement** to ensure that the Congolese government ends its relationship with the FDLR and that the Rwandan government allows FDLR combatants who are not wanted for genocide crimes to return safely and peacefully to Rwanda.
- **Maintain adequate support for the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUC) and U.S. bilateral aid.** Work with the international community to fill the position of a special human rights advisor for eastern Congo.
- Engage and assist the Congolese government and civil society in **establishing the rule of law.**
- **Support the Congolese government and civil society** in negotiations with mining companies for a fair share of revenues generated by their operations in the country.
- Support the Congolese Government in establishing a **special court to try war criminals** from all armed parties in eastern Congo since 1993 and support an investigation of the International Criminal Court in the region.

## **PART III: LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIA**

### **1. Colombia: Reduce Military Aid and Support Negotiations**

Internal conflict has plagued Colombia for more than fifty years, resulting in more than 3.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), ongoing human rights violations and a booming cocaine production industry.

In 2000, Colombia took center stage of U.S. foreign policy with the implementation of *Plan Colombia*—a 1.3 billion dollar aid package aimed at fighting the war on drugs in Colombia and promoting the rule of law. Soon thereafter, U.S. funding was partially unrestricted to help the Colombian military fight illegal armed groups

operating in the country. To date, over five billion dollars have been allocated for Colombia via *Plan Colombia*, but the original policy goals have yet to be realized.

Recognizing the failure of *Plan Colombia*, the U.S. Congress recently voted to increase social and humanitarian assistance to Colombia while reducing military aid. The next president should continue to promote this shift in aid by supporting a further reduction in military assistance and increased investment in viable social and economic programming for Colombia's rural and urban poor.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **Engage in robust diplomacy in support of a negotiated settlement to Colombia's conflict and the promotion of human rights.** The next Administration should urge ongoing negotiations between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and peace talks with the National Liberation Army (ELN). The U.S. should substantially reduce military aid to Colombia and also ensure that no U.S. military aid be given to Colombian military units employing anyone found guilty of, or currently under investigation for, human rights violations.
- **Work to end impunity in Colombia** by providing support for increased training, retention and recruitment of lawyers and staff for the Human Rights and Justice and Peace units of the Attorney General's office.
- **Reduce coca growth and cocaine production in Colombia** by ending U.S. support for aerial fumigations while increasing U.S. support for manual eradication accompanied by sustainable rural development. The U.S. should also invest in efforts to dismantle financial structures sustaining the drug industry.
- **Provide support to reduce internal displacement in Colombia.** In addition to continued humanitarian support for internally displaced communities, prioritize U.S. support for the protection of IDPs, for voluntary return, and the implementation of prevention mechanisms.

## 2. Cuba: End the Embargo, Restore Travel Freedom

The United States is the only country in the world imposing sanctions on Cuba. The U.S. economic embargo, which sought to weaken and remove Fidel Castro, has completely failed and has resulted in severe hardship for the general population, especially the most vulnerable.

Since 2005, reflecting a hardening of the embargo implementation, the U.S. State and Treasury Departments has further restricted the few remaining opportunities for Americans to travel to Cuba. The U.S. government has now limited Cuban-American family visits to only once every three years, with no exceptions for humanitarian emergencies; banned virtually all educational and cultural exchanges; and restricted religious travel. These measures trample on important American values – sustaining family life, religious freedom, academic liberty and the right to travel.

Of direct concern to U.S. churches, the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) broke with a decades-long practice of granting multiple-visit Cuba travel licenses to regional and national church bodies and ecumenical agencies. These religious institutions are now limited to one visit per calendar quarter, with additional restrictions on the number of travelers. Furthermore, some denominations have applied for but not been granted even these restricted licenses. Only local individual congregations are still being granted unrestricted licenses.

These restrictions create serious obstacles to Christian mission and fellowship. Relationship and fellowship are at the heart of the churches' understanding of their life and mission. To hinder this activity is to strike at the heart of the churches' religious identity and freedom.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **End the economic embargo on Cuba**
- **End the ban on travel to Cuba for all Americans**
- **In the absence of a full repeal of the embargo, reinstate religious freedom of travel to Cuba** by granting a general license for religious travel, and end restrictions on family travel and educational and cultural exchanges.

### **3 . Philippines: End Military Aid Until Impunity No Longer Reigns**

For the past eight years, the killing of members of the church and civil society in the Philippines working for human rights has steadily increased. According to a report by Karapatan, a Philippine human rights organization, there have been 886 extrajudicial killings and 179 disappearances since 2001.

The murders and disappearances are largely attributed to security forces and elements of the Philippine military. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, the armed forces of the Philippines continue to conduct operations that vilify members of civil society organizations and accuse them of being “front groups” for a communist insurgency. This creates a climate of fear that results in impunity for those responsible for crimes committed.

Many, including the Philippine Supreme Court and Amnesty International, are concerned that Philippine President Arroyo is trying to bypass the legal system in its counter insurgency program. After a visit to the country in 2007, the UN Special Rapporteur characterized the Philippine Armed Forces as being in a state of almost total denial on the need to resolve the significant numbers of killings that have been convincingly attributed to them. The Philippine government's own investigation by an independent commission has called for the government to take firmer action to resolve the killings.

In 2001 the U.S. Government identified the Philippines as the second front of the War on Terror and U.S. military aid has increased since, totaling more than \$406 million between 2001 and 2006. In 2008 alone, the Philippines Government will receive more than \$149 million in U.S. military aid and equipment. In 2005 the Government Accountability Office reported that the U.S. government's oversight of military aid and training to the Philippines was weak and ineffective.

The U.S. government should not provide military aid to the Philippines until the U.S. department of State and Defense can publicly certify that the Philippine government is not using such aid directly or indirectly to promote the abuse of human rights.

Specifically, we urge the next Administration to:

- **Verify that the Philippine Government is strictly enforcing a policy of command responsibility** by suspending, investigating and prosecuting military personnel responsible for human rights violations
- **Ensure that the Philippine Government is working to promote the security and human rights of all its citizens.**